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THE REFORMATION OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

WHEN we look back upon the endless contrasts and conflicts, the retrogressive movements, violent innovations, and still more violent reforms which are summarized under the peaceful name of "History," the pregnant words of Goethe, which express his opinion concerning the development of the right, rise irresistibly to our lips :

" All rights and laws are still transmitted
Like an eternal sickness of the race,—
From generation unto generation fitted
And shifted round from place to place,
Reason becomes a sham, Beneficence a wrong,
Thou art a grandchild, therefore woe to thee !
The right born with us, ours in verity,
This to consider, there's alas ! no hurry."

It may truly be said that the struggle between hereditary notions of right and the inborn rights of the individual is the underlying factor in the entire course of human history. Every one is, in fact, a "grandchild." Every one is forced to come into painful collision with social arrangements which were not made by him or for him. And the injuries thus sustained, whether of a material or a moral kind, have given the impetus to all reform movements, and especially to every revolution. But, as this conflict grows out of man's very nature, it cannot be avoided by attempting to deny the validity of hereditary rights altogether and setting up innate rights as the unique source of all law and order. Uhland has said :

" Was never prince so princely potent,
Was never mortal raised so high,
That he alone men's eager craving
For liberty might satisfy ;
That he alone the living fountain
Of universal right might seize,
Dispensing to the waiting nations
Little or much as he should please !"

And this applies to peoples no less than to kings. Only by compromise—by mutual accommodation between the old and the new rights—is true development possible. But, to be sure, such compromise is rarely reached by peaceful means. "Through struggle shalt thou gain thy right," says the great teacher of law, Ihering. The French Revolution, indeed, undertook to put an end to all further conflict by proclaiming the universal rights of man; in this, it may be remarked, France only followed the example given by the constitutions of the single States of North America. It was the merit of Professor Jellinek, of Heidelberg, to point out the source of that immortal declaration. But these universal rights can be expressed under earthly conditions only in the shape of a rough average justice, which is apt to be oppressive for many from the start, and certain to become so later on for all. Nor is there any remedy, except in a periodic revision of whatever is established, whether it appear in the form of laws, political constitutions, international treaties, or in the guise of morality and religion. As certain officials are charged with the supervision of the markets, to prevent by suitable tests the sale of adulterated articles of food, so, in the case of intellectual food, examination is needed in order that reason may not turn into nonsense and benefits into nuisances. And it is indeed wonderful how, at certain epochs, such revisions of generally-accepted notions and beliefs are carried out with almost systematic thoroughness, without constraint and without preconcerted agreement, quietly and yet irresistibly, solely through the power of intellect and the force of logic.

A more extended, a more painstaking, a more exhaustive examination of the accumulated mass of hereditary beliefs and ideas has never, perhaps, been attempted than that which took place during the great epoch at the close of which we have now arrived. Germany led the movement; all nations participated in it; Science carried the banner, but all departments of intellectual activity followed its leadership. So far as Science is concerned, no less a man than Goethe had formulated the dictum, "What is the universal? The particular instance. What is the particular? Millions of in-

stances." And scientists began at this time to work in the spirit of this formula. Instead of complacently contenting themselves with some single instance of the universal as the "philosophy of Nature" and the "philosophy of History" had done, the Science of Nature and the Science of History strove with indefatigable labor to reach a deeper understanding of the millions of special instances. Johannes Müller rose to eminence in combating the abstractions of natural philosophy by means of the study of individual facts, and his pupils were Helmholtz and Virchow. Leopold von Ranke declared that he was not interested in any general formula of what ought to happen, but wished to know in every case just what had actually happened. Thus the epoch of Hegel and Schelling, with its fondness for abstractions, called out, by way of reaction, a band of great investigators. In 1769 Alexander von Humboldt was born, one year later than Schleiermacher; in 1776, Niebuhr, the reformer of the science of history; in 1777, Gauss, the king of mathematicians; in 1779, Savigny, the father of the historical school; in 1785, Jacob Grimm, its greatest representative; in 1791, Bopp, the founder of the comparative study of language; in 1793, Carl Lachmann, who led philology along new paths; in 1795, Leopold von Ranke; in 1799, Döllinger, the most learned theologian for centuries; in 1800, Moltke, who turned the art of war into a science; in 1801, Johannes Müller. What a long list of brilliant men who, step by step, wrested province after province of knowledge from the aristocratic dictation of theory and ranged them under the rule of empirical investigation, modest in its claims and democratic in its methods.

To the men of the old School, however, democratic tendencies, even in the realm of science, remained suspicious. A. W. Schlegel's sarcastic comment on the "piety towards the unimportant" of the Brothers Grimm has often been quoted. Thus the older form of Romanticism looked with scorn on a movement that, nevertheless, had sprung from Romanticism itself. And not only A. W. Schlegel, but even the far younger Brentano, regarded the care devoted by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm to the study and preservation of fairy tales as some-

thing petty and almost ridiculous. For they were still controlled by the notion that consideration is due exclusively to what is extraordinary and exceptional, and not to what is simple and, on that very account, oft repeated. Step by step, the particular, as opposed to the general, had to vindicate its claim upon the attention.

The movement that had started in the domain of science was next carried forward into that of art, and here the study of details, as opposed to the academic rule of style, gained ground with extreme slowness. The individualizing tendency first showed itself in the matter of costume. Talma and Mlle. Mars, leaving off the undifferentiated costume of the Théâtre-Français, which had been used indiscriminately for Greek, Roman, and French *rôles*, acted in appropriate historical costumes. Düsseldorf artists studied the dress worn at the time of the Thirty Years' War. The faithful study of detail spread more and more; landscape painting, no longer subject to conventional rules of style, was treated in portrait fashion. And, finally, the School of Fontainebleau directed special attention to the momentary effects of light, atmospheric conditions, etc. At the present day, the study of detail in art has completely won its way, and is carried to extremes.

It was not till science and art had gone forward in the new direction that morality followed in their wake. The example set by these predecessors was, no doubt, a useful incentive, but the new respect for the rights of the individual which now appeared in the moral teachings of the time was, after all, chiefly the outgrowth of the same prevailing tendency that was determining the modern mind in every branch of its activity.

In all such questions, Germany formerly took the lead. It was soon again to come prominently forward; but, for a while, it lagged behind its neighbors. The speculative spirit among us had become too masterful. We had gone back to very nearly the same position which was called Realism in the language of mediæval Scholasticism, and which differs so radically from the Realism of the present day. Abstract nomina were again treated almost as if they had objective reality.

Such concepts as the State, History, *Volksgeist* (spirit of the people) were bandied to and fro until the concrete counterparts for which they stand—namely, the citizens, the laws, the actual happenings of history and the documents in which they were recorded—were almost forgotten. Even scholars who belonged to the new empirical movement fell into this error. Jacob Grimm himself made the impossible declaration, “*Das Volkslied dichtet sich selbst.*” Thus even he, at times, lost sight of the concrete personalities with which the science of History is wholly concerned.

In the field of moral science, especially, the Germans have ever been inclined to abstract speculations, and here the stimulus of foreign influence was needed to produce a change. Such a stimulus came, and from the very same quarter whence, a hundred years before, at the time of Voltaire and Rousseau, had already issued a mighty summons towards the examination of old hereditary beliefs.

Though, at bottom, closely related to the German movement which we have described, the French movement, nevertheless, clearly reveals the characteristic difference between the two nationalities. Among the French, even when war is waged on tradition, traditions must be preserved. Even when they attack ideas which, during past ages, have weakened into abstractions, they are not prepared to grapple unflinchingly with particular facts. This is most evident in their method of writing history, and in their theory of art. Thiers and Lanfrey, and Taine in history; Boileau, Victor Hugo, and Taine once more in art,—they all destroyed old “legends,” only to replace them by others which they naïvely accepted as true, and which were really so in a certain sense, as compared with the ones they superseded. A middle position between philosophical abstraction and exact empiricism suits the national character of the French. Descartes stands just midway between Hegel and Herbert Spencer. Hence one can understand that the French should be born mathematicians, psychologists, diplomatists; that they should lack stirring poetry, and should be free from the vice of minute specialism. These national differences must be taken into account

in comparing the French with the German reaction against abstractions.

Bastiat seems to come closest to the German manner when, in his article on "The State" (1848), he inveighs against the perverted use of this word. He shows up the strange illusions which may be produced by playing on this and similar terms.

"Voici les premiers mots du préambule de la Constitution : 'La France s'est constituée en République pour appeler tous les citoyens à un degré toujours plus élevé de moralité, de lumière et de bien-être. Ainsi, c'est la France ou l'abstraction qui appelle les Français ou les réalités à la moralité, au bien-être, etc. . . .' Mais, pour prendre en flagrant délit d'inanité la proposition constitutionnelle, il suffit de montrer qu'elle peut être retournée, je ne dirai pas sans inconvénient, mais même avec avantage. L'exactitude souffrirait-elle si le préambule avait dit : 'Les Français se sont constitués en République pour appeler la France à un degré toujours plus élevé de moralité, de lumière et de bien-être'? Or, quelle est la valeur d'un axiome où le sujet et l'attribut peuvent chasser croiser sans inconvénient? Tout le monde comprend qu'on dise : 'La mère allaitera l'enfant.' Mais il serait ridicule de dire : 'L'enfant allaitera la mère.'"

And he holds up as an example to the French the Americans whose Constitution begins, "We, the people of the United States, etc." This is highly characteristic. It is plain that Bastiat desires to get rid of the abstract notion "State," in order to come down to concrete, living beings. But he stops half-way, for the term, "the people," which he quotes with approbation, is itself only an abstraction. Still, at least, in his aim, he coincides with that of the German natural scientists who replace the mystic term "*vis vitæ*" by the definite naming of physical and chemical processes. But Bastiat, it must be remembered, is strongly subject to English influences. In the case of Frenchmen not so influenced, the attack against the ascendancy of Universals takes a totally different and highly characteristic turn. Whereas, the associates of Johannes Müller and Leopold von Ranke combined against the abstract "*idea*," the contemporaries of La Mennais and those also of Bastiat are united against the abstract "*formula*." The lifeless *word* is an abomination to one party; the petrified *phrase* to the other. And this contrast is thoroughgoing, though it cannot be denied that often enough words in the one

case, phrases in the other, were reinstated in the honors of which they had apparently been dispossessed.

At the same time that Moritz Haupt, the great philologist, was teaching his pupils how detrimental to true understanding is the use of technical terms, such as "Enallage" and the like, which cover up a psychological process by the use of obscure words, Gustave Flaubert was undertaking a crusade through the French school-books in order to impale on his sword the "fleurs d'histoire" and similar empty phrases, which, palpably untrue or half true, distort actual events beyond recognition. "Je me défie des thèses qui stérilisent l'esprit humain," says Quinet. Flaubert and Quinet are in this, as in other respects, the heirs of the French Romanticists, though Flaubert has, in many ways, departed from their teachings.

These French disciples of Romanticism, moreover, were almost as influential in disseminating throughout Europe the new ideas which they had adopted, but not originated, as were formerly the men of the French Revolution in the propaganda of English ideas concerning Constitutions and popular liberty.

They are not, however, to be simply identified as Romanticists with their German confrères. Much as both had in common, much as the former learned from the latter (Flaubert and Quinet, too, were pupils of the Germans), in other respects they were diametrically opposed to each other. What they had in common was, above all, an arrogant belief in the privileges of genius and a craze for originality. "Epater le bourgeois" might have been the motto of Clemens Brentano as well as of Theophile Gautier. Alike they hated and despised the "Philistines," and succeeded in spreading this contempt far beyond the ranks of their own followers. Henri Monnier parodied M. Prudhomme, just as Brentano and Görres had parodied the Virtuous Watchmaker. And correspondingly we find them glorifying, now in a pathetic, now in a homely vein, a mode of existence wholly free from conventional restraints. Alfred de Vigny made a tragedy of Chatterton's life, as Oehlen-schläger used the life of Correggio, and Tieck that of Camoens. They taught alike that "the mark of poetic genius is the mark

of Cain," as Victor Hugo's disciple Freiligrath put it. And Murger depicted "La Vie de Bohème" with the same partiality that Eichendorff and Tieck showed in describing in their novels the enviable lot of the "ne'er do well."

But there are also marked differences that distinguish the romantic literature of the French from that of the Germans. Whereas the Germans delight in the lack of form, and remind us, by tricks of sound and suggestion, far more of the "decadents" of to-day, of the Verlaines and Mallarmés, than of such artists in verse as Theophile Gautier or Banville, the French seek to carry form to the point of highest perfection. Every one knows the celebrated phrase, "De la forme naît l'idée," which, rightly interpreted, is by no means devoid of relative truth, though decidedly French in flavor. Pascal, in a similar vein, had advised people to take part in church observances, promising that the devotional mood would be sure to follow. But the contrast of German and French Romanticism would be of slight importance to the subject we are considering if it were noticeable only in the realm of verse. It is, however, by no means confined to this department. The German poets and ideologists who believed with Schiller that "it is the spirit that builds the body" held aloof from political life. A few of them, to be sure—for instance, Frederic Schlegel, Adam Müller, and Görres—did take part in reactionary politics, but that was later in their career, when their literary spring-time was over. The leading spirits—as Tieck, Arnim, Brentano—remained entirely outside of political relations. In striking contrast, we remark among the French Romanticists, from the very first, a strong political tendency. In matters of the state, too, they look for the regeneration of the spirit by means of a change in form; whereas the Germans expect existing institutions to be reformed by a regeneration of the spirit. Victor Hugo, indeed, began as a Royalist, but it was certainly not personal reasons alone that led him so soon into the camp of Democracy. His sympathy with the picturesque Middle Ages did not obstruct his clearness of vision in this respect any more than that of Uhland and Grimm in Germany.

But even more marked than the political tendency among the French Romanticists is their decided interest in social questions. With them æsthetic disgust for the bourgeois turned into revolt against the institutions which had brought forth the bourgeois. Tieck and Brentano never dreamed of urging the condemnation of the Philistine to the point of hostility against the middle class. But Victor Hugo and La Mennais vigorously sound the note of pity for "*Les Misérables*," the outcast and disinherited. And with the head of the School, as was later on the case with Dostoyevski, the hatred of the sleek bourgeoisie is even carried so far as to become a glorification of the convict and the harlot. This contrast may be due, in a minor degree, to the difference existing between the middle class of Germany and that of France. The former, from which Brentano took his type of the Philistine, had fought and suffered for the independence of the Fatherland. The latter, which suggested to Henri Monnier his *M. Prudhomme*, had obeyed the celebrated counsel "*Enrichissez-vous*" of the bourgeois minister Guizot. And the same difference also existed with respect to the official class which, in both countries, was justly regarded as typically representative of the bourgeoisie. In Germany the officials strove with benevolent care to improve the condition of the poor. In France, a Marshal Soult, whose extortions while in Spain had been so infamous as even to provoke formal censure by Napoleon, could yet reply, as President of the Ministry, to the striking silk-weavers of Lyons, whose conduct had been irreproachable, that he would not confer with brigands.

Nevertheless, I do not believe this reason to have been the principal one. It was, rather, their detestation of insincere phrases that actuated the French Romanticists in their attacks on the bourgeoisie. The humanitarian phrase on the lips of a selfish shop-keeping class,—nothing is more fitted than that to excite the animosity of idealists! And this suggests to us, in passing, the celebrated name of Carlyle, whose bitterness against the hypocritical piety of England's ruling class, the merchants, led him in a similar way to take sides with the

oppressed, and who, together with Maurice and Kingsley, created what may be called Bible Socialism for England, as La Mennais created it for France and the world. La Mennais had already, in his first period, in his "Essai sur l'Indifférence," rebuked the Liberals and their "apathetic philanthropy;" and from that time on the hard-heartedness of the bourgeois was a favorite theme of the Romantic School and of their allies. "A man of benevolent phrases, coupled with inflexible egotism,"—thus Henri Monnier characterizes his M. Prudhomme. Victor Hugo depicts the wealthy after the same fashion, and down to the diaries of the De Goncourts this accusation is reiterated, growing constantly more pointed. At the time when Fichte and Schelling, the philosophers of Romanticism (for Fichte is, at bottom, more romantic than Hegel, though less so than Schopenhauer), stamped Lessing's friend Nicolai as the type of the German literary Philistine, they saw no reason to add the trait of an unfeeling heart to the caricature that they drew. But when Flaubert, in his incomparable character of Homais in "Mme. Bovary," depicted a French Voltairean, it was precisely the discrepancy between the benevolent speeches and the hard character of the man that gives its peculiar stamp to this type of the French Philistine of 1847. We can here recognize once more how æsthetic and ethical, political and social points of view condition and impinge upon each other. If a common designation is desired which may be applied to the German struggle against the empty word and the French crusade against the phrase, to La Mennais's treatment of Christianity and Flaubert's treatment of the bourgeoisie, we cannot do better than to speak of them as phases of the general movement which had set in for the revision of traditional views. A thorough sifting of expressions, propositions, opinions, assertions, once universally accepted, is characteristic of this period. It is this sifting that leads to the "discovery of the individual." As the curtain of deceptive generalities is lifted, everywhere the particular case rises into view. And thus is explained that tendency to compare semblance with reality so prominent in literature and evident even in the titles of a long list of books

which might be quoted,—from Görres's "Rome as it is," in 1824, to Lothar Bucher's "Parliamentarism as it is," in 1856. This tendency, in fact, became so powerful as to be projected backward into the past. For instance, the great German historian Gervinus, in the analysis of Shakespeare's plays which he published in 1849, believed he had discovered that the contrast between seeming and being is the one ever-recurring theme in the dramas of that most versatile of poets.

That such a revision of ideas should concern itself especially with the great "commonplaces" of human society, religion, manners, politics, is but natural. Carlyle's philosophic, satirical "Sartor Resartus" sums up the subject in a general way in the words, "All human questions and opinions are merely garments which man changes." Flaubert, with his melancholy genius, reviews the actual or imaginary illusions of mankind in a whole series of realistic novels, the basis of which is evident. "Mme. Bovary" is intended to illustrate the subject of love; "Salammbô" and "La Tentation de St. Antoine" the pagan and Christian religions. "L'Education Sentimentale" shows how an enthusiastic youth is trained, by the experience of life, to complete indifference, and learns to despise friendship and reverence, patriotism and the love of liberty.* The unfinished masterpiece "Bonvard et Pécuchet" is designed to satirize all higher aspiration as such; a theme the terrible treatment of which goes far beyond the pessimism of Byron, Schopenhauer, Leopardi, and all their successors.

This kind of literature, which may best be called "disillusionment literature," did but reach its highest expression in Flaubert. As he was followed by Daudet, a painstaking specialist, who examines all the various forms of love under his magnifying-glass (marital love in "Fromont Jeune et Risler Aîné," illicit love in "Sappho," filial love in "Rose et Ninette"), and who, in the course of his examination, makes the same ugly discoveries as Gulliver when he approached too

* This is likewise the purpose of the striking novel, "Niels Lyhne," by the Danish author, J. B. Jacobsen, though the point of view of this author is, in other respects, a totally different one.

near the giant maids of honor of the Court of Brobdingnag, so had he been preceded by Beyle Stendhal, who, in his famous description of the battle of Waterloo, sought to present a realistic study of the actual facts in contrast with the usual heroic battle-pieces. Nay, in looking for the original germs of this literature, which makes it its business to tear off the masks and the disguises, we can, of course, go still farther back; to Lichtenberg, for instance (who exclaims somewhere, "Who knows whether it is a prayer or a drink of whiskey that fortifies the roofer in going to his dangerous task?"), to Swift, La Rochefoucauld, and, finally, to St. Augustine, who sought to show that the virtues of the pagans were but shining vices. One important difference, however, must be noted. Those earlier pessimists endeavored to disclose the wicked basis of the human soul as they conceived of it. The later critics sought to attack not so much man as man's good opinion of himself. The keynote of all these revelations is to be found in Schopenhauer's indignant reflections upon what he calls the "ruthless optimism" of the Leibnitz school. But precisely because it was in France that the enthusiastic belief in the goodness and virtue of the natural man under the lead of Rousseau had been carried to its highest point, it could not fail that the process of disillusionment when it set in should show itself in that country in its most violent forms.

Next to Flaubert we must place the great epigrammatist in character-drawing, Gavarni, who gives to one of his principal works the significant title of "*Masques et Visages*," and represents his pauper philosopher, Virelocque, as shrugging his shoulders disdainfully at the pretensions of the human race. Then there are the De Goncourts and Zola. What has been signalized as the characteristic feature of the entire movement of this period, namely, the vigorous rejection of alien ideals, without any corresponding development of one's own ideals to take their place, is particularly striking with respect to these authors. Flaubert's "*Mme. Bovary*" is led astray by the false idealism which she had absorbed from certain novels,—a polemical device this which was already employed in the days of Wieland, nay, earlier still, at the time of Cervantes, and

which even Zola, Flaubert's pupil of grotesque genius, believed himself at liberty to use. (In "Pot Bouille" the heroine falls in consequence of reading George Sand's "André.") But these are tricks of warfare which great artists ought really to leave to the petty writers of edifying tracts. How easy a task it would be to turn the same weapon against the realists and pessimists themselves, to depict a modern youth, for instance, who should enter life with absolutely wrong ideas, from having read too much of Zola and Ibsen, and whose fatality it would be to discover that drunkenness, adultery, and moral enormities of every kind are not quite so common as he had been led to believe by the careful study of these fanatics of reality. And such a parody would, doubtless, strike deeper than that of the German humorist, Glasbrenner, who good-naturedly satirizes in "Berlin as it eats and drinks" those books on "Rome as it is" and "Parliamentarism as it is" which attempt to give the true instead of the conventional picture!

Every one recognizes that the present time shares with the period we have described this tendency to expose shams. Do not Zola and Ibsen represent the very present in literature? And do they not attempt to equal Flaubert and Gavarni in the task of exposing the ghosts of ever-recurring, mistaken ideals? Nevertheless, in one respect, they have not yet attained to the pessimism of their predecessors. That mankind is progressing in culture is almost universally accepted by the modern school. Ibsen believes, as did Heine and Immermann, in the "Third Kingdom" of the future. Zola trusts in the development of technical science and of democracy. Not so the older school. From the time of Perrault to that of Condorcet, as has been shown by Brunetière, the idea of progress had been developed more and more into a dogma. But then doubts began to be whispered. Already Goethe's Faust had sceptically asked of the learned Philistine, Wagner, whether we are really so gloriously far advanced as we suppose? Flaubert, on his part, contended for the very opposite theory. Whereas, hitherto, everything had been expected of the perfectability of the human race, he

believed in the hopeless stupidity of man. Man, according to him, is a born bungler and dilettant, and dilettants, on Goethe's authority, are incurable. To all mankind the author of *Bouvard and Pécuchet* would apply the lines which Platen, in his irritation, aimed against German literature: "In an ocean of imbecility there appear a few gifted swimmers." And if Tolstoi has got to the point of seeing the net result of all intellectual development, the net result of all our vaunted civilization, and of the "subjugation of the elements" in the mere increase of cleanliness, this is a repetition of what Flaubert said before him, and goes to prove what might equally be proved in other ways, that Russia has just arrived at about the year 1860. In that country the old-style calendar seems to prevail in intellectual matters also! Only it is to be noted that, in the spiral movement of human evolution, it not infrequently happens that the signs of a belated and of a too early development appear simultaneously; and so we need not be surprised if we already see a new growth of pessimism announcing itself in some of the most recent writers, like Huysman, Wilde, and others.

We must not, however, look on such extreme views as characteristic of any particular time. Singly, they may, perhaps, be found in every epoch. And, on the other hand, they never appear in any epoch except in single instances. The belief in progress seems to be innate in man. Every one observes in his own case and that of his neighbors the ripening of feeble childhood into robust manhood; and the requirements of the struggle for existence compel us to regard this process as progress. Again, to be sure, alongside of the experience of the growth and increase of strength there is the no less universal observation of the decline and decay of our powers in old age. And, as the interpretation of the world in terms of man, of the macrocosm in terms of the microcosm is, so to speak, the beginning and end of all mythology, we find among all the peoples of the earth a belief in the development of humanity, which, at one time, takes on a hopeful, at another time a mournful hue. The Golden Age, the time of greatest strength and highest efflorescence, is sometimes projected into

the future, sometimes into the past. Sometimes, as among the ancient Teutons, the end is supposed to reflect the beginning, as in a long corridor with mirrors set at either end. But, nevertheless, the conviction that there is *movement* in human history has remained a fixed belief, both of the peoples and of the philosophers. Leopardi, the saddest of pessimist poets, inverting the theory of progress propounded by the encyclopædists, taught the cruel doctrine of the constant deterioration of men and of the gods. The immobility of man even he dared not posit. Schopenhauer, his admirer, who looks forward to ultimate salvation in Nirvana, is, after all, more optimistic than those pious Christians who believe in the everlasting punishments of hell: so firmly implanted in man is the idea of development. Goethe, too, whose sceptical language we quoted above (he has said in a similar vein, "Who can think anything wise, anything stupid that has not been thought before?") is, nevertheless, one of the pioneers of the evolutionary theory, specifically so-called, which our century has baptized with the name of Darwin. And how inflexibly did the philosophers, economists, and politicians of the French Romantic School adhere to the idea of progress! I need but mention Comte among the philosophers, Fourier among the economists (if, indeed, his claim to the title be not disputed), Fourier, whose utopian dreams in regard to the manner in which the elements are to be rendered tributary to the uses of man, cause him to appear as a predecessor of the Whistlers and Huysmans, according to whose view clumsy Nature is simply raw material, and furnishes daily opportunity for human skill to put its blundering efforts to the blush. A tremendous exercise of force is needed, a pessimistic obstinacy almost unparalleled, in order to believe in the complete stability of human conditions, the absolute absence of development in human affairs. And we must therefore look upon Flaubert and the few who held with him as detached and somewhat isolated members of the pessimistic company.

After all, the belief in development did not belong in the category of *official* dogmas, and it was at these that the revision undertaken by the reformers was especially aimed.

Amongst the official *Idola Fori* two are conspicuous above the rest,—State and Church. Both of these were subjected to the same critique. The attempt was made to withdraw from the State as one may withdraw, if one likes, from the established Church. Cabet sought to establish *Icaria*, just as Owen and others before him had tried to realize an ideal State. Johannes Ronge started the German Catholic Movement. Michelet endeavored to found a new religion of humanity with his “*Bible de l’Humanité*” as a basis. All of these men leaned on predecessors that were positive in tendency; the Communists on the early Christian Church; the German Catholics on the “Religion of Reason,” as proclaimed by Pope, Voltaire, and Frederick the Great; Michelet on the theophilanthropism of Laréveillière-Lepeaux. But their own attitude was more negative than positive, characterized by its opposition to bourgeois and police, to ultra-montanism and intolerance. Finally, this purely sentimental critique of State and Church, this mere offspring of antipathies, developed into the empty negation of the Blanquists: “*Ni Dieu ni Maître.*” A fertile and truly productive criticism of State and Church was denied to these men, and Cabet’s, “*Icaria*,” like Owen’s “*Harmony*,” Ronge’s German Catholic Church, as well as Uhlich’s “*Free Religious Societies*,” were, of necessity, short-lived, asthmatic existences, whose hectic flush was erroneously taken for the glow of enthusiastic youth at the time. The lasting work of criticism with respect to Church and State was destined to be produced by other men. The disciples of the French Romantic School were doomed to sterility, because they were too eager, too precipitate in the attempt to create what should be permanent.

But, some pessimist might object, are not then all efforts of this kind equally fruitless? Does not the most nourishing bread become mouldy after a little? Does not the clearest water turn cloudy and unwholesome? Whether “*Icaria*” continues for a few years only, or the evolution theory based on Darwin’s scientific labors lives for a few centuries, is the difference at bottom so very great? Do not the revisions and reconstructions that become unavoidable after longer or shorter periods, plainly prove the impotence of the human

race to produce lasting results in the intellectual realm? The Roman aqueducts of the Provence still serve at the present day their utilitarian purpose. The Pantheon still edifies and delights the beholder. But what the intellect of man creates in order to satisfy, to improve, and to increase the happiness of generations seems fated, after a short while, to trouble the life and happiness of men and to become the very obstacle of their improvement.

We may not contradict this statement too vehemently. It cannot be denied that all attempts to permanently organize the future have failed and will ever fail. The ideal State proposed by the Socialists, if it should be established, may, perhaps, serve its purpose in its day, just as did the Absolutist or the Patriarchal States in their day, and may then become a hinderance to further development. But such reflections as these do not, for all that, land us in the conclusions of the pessimist. We recognize, rather, how tirelessly the spirit of man is ever searching and striving, nothing being good enough and high enough to satisfy his ideal aims. We recognize how perfectly the words of Goethe that refer to Faust are applicable to the whole human race :

“ Thus let him wander down his earthly day ;
Where spirits haunt, go quietly his way ;
In marching onwards, bliss and torment find,
Though, every moment, with unsated mind !”

And, if we were to point the moral of human history we should again find no better way of expressing it than in the following lines from the same inexhaustible poem :

“ Yes, to this thought I hold with firm persistence ;
The last result of wisdom stamps it true ;
He only earns his freedom and existence
Who daily conquers them anew.”

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